

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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120th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2001

Legislative Document

No. 291

H.P. 255

House of Representatives, January 25, 2001

**An Act to Require Teaching of Maine Native American History and
Culture in Maine's Schools.**

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

Millicent M. MacFarland

MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND, Clerk

Presented by Representative LORING of the Penobscot Nation.
Cosponsored by Senator CATHCART of Penobscot and
Representatives: BAKER of Bangor, BERRY of Livermore, HUTTON of Bowdoinham,
KASPRZAK of Newport, SOCTOMAH of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, WATSON of
Farmingdale, Senators: President Pro Tem BENNETT of Oxford, TREAT of Kennebec.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §4706**, as amended by PL 1991, c. 655, §4,
4 is further amended to read:

6 **§4706. Instruction in American history, Maine studies and Maine**
8 **Native American history**

10 The following subjects shall ~~be~~ are required.

12 **1. American history.** American history and civil government,
14 including the Constitution of the United States, the Declaration
16 of Independence, the importance of voting and the privileges and
responsibilities of citizenship, ~~shall~~ must be taught in and
required for graduation from all elementary and secondary
schools, both public and private.

18 **2. Maine studies.** A course in Maine history, including the
20 Constitution of Maine, Maine geography and environment and the
22 natural, industrial and economic resources of Maine and Maine's
24 cultural and ethnic heritage, must be taught in at least one
grade from grade 6 to grade 8, in all schools, both public and
private. These concepts must be integrated into the curriculum
in grades 9 to 12.

26 **3. Maine Native American history.** Maine Native American
28 history and culture must be taught in all elementary and
secondary schools, both public and private.

30 **4. Rulemaking.** The commissioner shall adopt or amend rules
32 to implement this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this
section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5,
34 chapter 375, subchapter II-A.

36 **Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §6209, first ¶**, as amended by PL 1999, c. 75,
§5, is further amended to read:

38 The department in consultation with the state board shall
40 establish and implement a comprehensive, statewide system of
42 learning results, referred to in this section as the "system," no
44 later than the 2002-03 school year. The system, based broadly
46 upon guiding principles set forth in this section, must establish
high academic standards at all grade levels in the areas of math;
English; science and technology; social studies, including
48 history, economics and civics; career preparation; visual and
performing arts; health and physical education; and foreign
languages. Maine Native American history and culture must be
included in, but is not limited to, the areas of social studies
and modern and classical languages. Only students in a public
50 school or a private school approved by the State pursuant to

2 section 2901 and approved for the receipt of public funds by
3 private secondary schools pursuant to section 2951 are required
4 to participate in the system of learning results. The
5 commissioner shall develop accommodation provisions for instances
6 where course content conflicts with sincerely held religious
7 beliefs and practices of a student's parent or guardian. The
8 system must be adopted to accommodate exceptional students as
defined in section 7001, subsection 2.

10 **Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §6209, sub-§3** is enacted to read:

12 3. Rulemaking. The commissioner shall adopt or amend rules
13 to implement this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this
14 section are routine technical rules as defined by Title 5,
15 chapter 375, subchapter II-A. On or before September 1, 2003,
16 the commissioner shall adopt rules to incorporate Maine Native
17 American history and culture into the standards and performance
18 indicators of the 8 content standard subject areas that comprise
19 the system. In adopting these rules, the commissioner shall
20 amend the standards and performance indicators in the content
21 standard subject areas of social studies under the headings of
22 civics and government, history, geography and economics that
23 address the following topics:

24
25 A. Maine tribal governments and political systems, and
26 their relationship with local, state, national and
27 international governments;

28
29 B. Maine Native American cultural systems and the
30 experience of Maine tribal people throughout history;

31
32 C. Maine Native American territories; and

33
34 D. Maine Native American economic systems.

36 **Sec. 4. Commission established.** The Commission to Study the
37 Inclusion of Maine Native American History and Culture in Maine's
38 System of Learning Results, referred to in this section as the
39 "commission," is established to assist school administrative
40 units and educators in the exploration of a wide range of
41 curricular programs and options that include Maine Native
42 American history and culture in a manner that is consistent with
43 the guiding principles of the system of learning results
44 established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section
45 6209. The curricular programs and options must be developed so
46 that the inclusion of Maine Native American history and culture
47 coincides with the full implementation of the system of learning
48 results for the 2002-03 school year.

2 **1. Membership.** The commission consists of the following 7
members:

4 A. Four members representing the tribal chiefs and
governors of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation,
6 the Houlton Band of Maliseets and the Aroostook Band of
Micmacs or the tribal chiefs' or governors' designees;

8 B. The Commissioner of Education or the commissioner's
10 designee;

12 C. The Chair of the State Board of Education or the chair's
designee; and

14 D. The Chancellor of the University of Maine System or the
16 chancellor's designee.

18 No later than 30 days following the effective date of this Act,
the Commissioner of Education or the commissioner's designee
20 shall call and convene the first meeting of the commission. The
Commissioner of Education shall select a chair from among the
22 commission members prior to the first commission meeting.

24 **2. Duties.** The commission shall report to the Commissioner
of Education for implementation of its findings on:

26 A. Curricular programs and options that are appropriate to
28 assist school administrative units and educators in the
State to include Maine Native American history and culture
30 into the system of learning results; and

32 B. The necessary professional development, training and
34 technical assistance that must be provided to assist school
administrative units and educators in the State in
36 implementing Maine Native American history and culture into
the system of learning results.

38 **3. Staff assistance and budget.** The Department of
Education shall provide staffing assistance and research services
40 to the commission. The department may elect to provide members
of the commission with per diem and expenses for their
42 participation in commission meetings.

44 **4. Implementation.** The recommendations of the commission
must be submitted to the Commissioner of Education no later than
46 June 1, 2003 and must be implemented no later than September 1,
2003.

48

SUMMARY

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4 This bill requires that Maine Native American history and
6 culture be taught in all elementary and secondary schools and
8 requires the Department of Education to include Maine Native
 American history and culture in the system of learning results.
 This bill establishes a commission to investigate and recommend
 how the Department of Education will accomplish this task.